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## Content Development for WeChat Official Account Posts in University Libraries: A Case Study of Beijing Normal University Library (Postprint)

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### Abstract

[Objective/Significance] This study aims to provide experience and recommendations for content construction of WeChat Official Account posts in university libraries. [Method/Process] Through case analysis, web-based data research, and comparative analysis, it introduces the philosophy, principles, effectiveness, and management approaches of Beijing Normal University Library's WeChat Official Account in post content development. [Results/Conclusion] Recommendations are proposed, including: emphasizing holistic planning of WeChat content sections, adhering to original copywriting, institutionalizing high-quality original columns, strengthening cooperation with campus new media, and vigorously promoting the institutional development of WeChat operation systems.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### Research on WeChat Public Platform Content Construction in University Libraries: A Case Study of Beijing Normal University Library

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] This study aims to provide experience and recommendations for university libraries engaged in WeChat public platform content construction. [Method/Process] Through case analysis, web-based data investigation, and comparative analysis, this paper introduces the philosophy, principles, effectiveness, and management approaches of Beijing Normal University Li-

brary's WeChat public account in content construction. **[Result/Conclusion]** The paper proposes recommendations focusing on: overall planning of WeChat content sections, commitment to original copywriting, serialization of high-quality original columns, strengthening cooperation with campus new media, and vigorously promoting the institutional development of WeChat operations.

**Keywords:** university library; WeChat public platform; WeChat subscription account; content construction

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In today's ubiquitous mobile internet environment, WeChat has become deeply integrated with university students' habits of relying on smartphones for communication and information acquisition. The *2016 China University Campus Media Development Report* shows that 87.26% of universities have WeChat public accounts, and the usage of university WeChat public platforms has surpassed campus portals, BBS, and other social media, becoming the most active and influential media platform on university campuses [1]. According to the authors' investigation, as of the end of 2017, 40 out of 42 "Double First-Class" university libraries had launched WeChat public accounts. New media development should be "supported by advanced technology and fundamentally based on content construction" [2], with content innovation as the foundation and parallel innovation in both content and form. However, relevant research [3] indicates that current university library WeChat and Weibo services remain limited to basic functions such as announcements, news, lectures, training, and book recommendations, showing little innovative breakthrough over extended periods. Using the Beijing Normal University Library WeChat public platform (hereinafter referred to as "BNU Library WeChat") as an example, this paper introduces the library's exploratory practices and supporting measures in content construction for information push services, aiming to provide reference for relevant libraries.

## 1. Basic Situation of BNU Library WeChat

Beijing Normal University Library launched its WeChat subscription account "Beijing Normal University Library (bnulibrary)" in October 2012, with the functional positioning of "publishing library information and providing consultation services." It passed institutional verification in May 2014. By the end of December 2017, BNU Library WeChat had published 734 graphic messages. In its early stages, the account followed conventional practices, focusing primarily on various library news and events as its main push content, maintaining a lukewarm status. Since the second half of 2015, BNU Library WeChat has aimed to "deepen platform application, get closer to users, enhance communication, understand deep-level needs, and improve library services," emphasizing campus cooperation, strengthening content construction, and continuously enhancing the library's influence both on and off campus. This approach has garnered attention from numerous faculty, students, and external readers, as well as professionals in university libraries. By the end of 2017, the cumulative number of

followers reached 23,952. In the continuously updated “Top 50 Most Influential WeChat Public Accounts of Beijing Normal University” ranking on the campus BBS “Dan Dan Net,” the library’s account has remained stable in the first tier and ranks among the top university library WeChat accounts in the Beijing area.

Due to similar business operations, university libraries often face content homogenization in their WeChat publications. A search on CNKI reveals that research on university library WeChat public accounts has grown steadily since 2013, with numerous quantitative survey papers [1, 4-6]. These studies primarily investigate the development status of WeChat public accounts in certain types or regional university libraries, examining aspects such as the number of platforms, published content, service items, and technological development. Research on published content mostly focuses on statistical analysis of content types and horizontal comparison of WCI indices, with few articles systematically examining the overall planning philosophy of WeChat tweet content construction through individual cases. This paper addresses this gap by presenting a case study of Beijing Normal University Library’s WeChat public platform.

## 2. Content Construction of BNU Library WeChat Information Push

### 2.1 Theme Planning: Balancing Hot Topics and Collection Features

Currently, campus new media forms are rich and numerous, offering more choices for both publishers and audiences. At Beijing Normal University alone, according to the authors’ incomplete statistics, there are over 100 public accounts including the university’s official account, secondary unit accounts, and student organization accounts, with nearly 50 having a certain influence. Standing out among numerous official campus media ultimately depends on effective theme planning. Relevant surveys [6] show that the most popular content among readers is campus news covering teaching, research, management, logistics, as well as student learning, group activities, and personal development. BNU Library WeChat combines library characteristics with top-level design and theme planning, focusing its reporting on five key aspects:

First, theme planning emphasizes integration with social and campus hot topics. Campus life is the main theme of campus media. The library accommodates the needs of different campus readers and plans WeChat content according to different time periods. For example, before winter vacation, it created a customized “Library Guide for Winter Holiday 2017” for international students; during winter vacation, it warmly pushed “A Poetic Time Exclusively from the Library for the New Year”; after summer began, it pushed “The Library Teaches You to Enjoy Air Conditioning Elegantly”; before Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, it published activity calls for “Gifts of Love for Parents”; and it collaborated with the university’s publicity department to push “A Day in the Life of a Top Student at the Library” and “Library Strategy Series.”

Second, the library deeply explores its special collections to tell documentary stories. The “Jingshi Treasures” column extends the original “Ancient Books Treasures” column. The original column only published pictures of ancient books, cataloging information, and professional brief appreciations. To better suit WeChat reading, the revised “Jingshi Treasures” articles include not only the origin, organization, restoration, and characteristics and value of the documents, but also deliberately excavate “stories” about the authors, collectors, organizers, or other related figures of these books to enhance readability. Column click rates increased from under 200 to a maximum of several thousand, with some articles reprinted by other platforms. Promoting special and key discipline resources through WeChat not only assists faculty research but also attracts attention from external peers, expanding influence.

Third, the library integrates collections with traditional culture to tell historical and cultural stories. Traditional culture remains ever fresh. Using WeChat to innovate content in ways favored by young students, combined with collection resources to tell historical and cultural stories, easily gains recognition. In 2017, Beijing Normal University Library, together with the Institute of Social Management and the Department of Anthropology and Folklore, jointly launched the “Seasonal Folk Customs · Solar Terms” series on BNU Library WeChat, pushing poetry, calligraphy, folk customs, and books related to each solar term on the day it occurred. Additionally, the library has timely launched book exhibitions and activity planning about intangible cultural heritage content, gaining attention and participation from faculty and students.

Fourth, the library promotes reading enjoyment. WeChat not only subtly influences university students’ communication methods but also changes their reading habits. As an important venue for reading promotion among university students, university libraries are striving to change traditional service methods to meet readers’ growing reading needs [7]. According to a 2017 reading status survey of 81 normal universities conducted by the Secretariat of the National Normal University Libraries Alliance during “World Book Day,” recommendations from new media platforms are the most relied-upon approach for students when selecting books. In 2017, BNU Library WeChat focused on innovating reading promotion activities, planning a series of events and columns such as “Readers,” “Enjoy Reading Time,” and “Jingshi Book Charm” to guide young students to overcome impetuosity and read more classics.

Fifth, the library “micro-izes” information literacy education. In the “Internet Plus” era, information literacy education extends wherever readers are, and mobile information literacy education is the trend. While continuing to value traditional methods—series lectures—Beijing Normal University Library was also among the first in the industry to conduct information literacy education via WeChat. Based on the public elective course and lecture series system, and referencing frequently asked questions in consultation services and user needs in different semester stages, the library selects general, independent small knowledge points suitable for fragmented learning that are common and highly uti-

lized. Using tools such as Prezi, Camtasia, and GoldWave, it publishes content combining graphics and videos, achieving good results.

## 2.2 WeChat Column Refinement

For media, brand columns represent core competitiveness [8]. When establishing columns, the library first considers sustainability—whether there are sufficient materials for long-term contribution, making column forms relatively stable and distinctive. Second, it emphasizes originality, as original articles bring their own traffic. Statistics show that the average reading volume of original content pushed weekly by the official WeChat of China Youth University of Political Studies is 2,455, nearly 15% higher than the overall average of 2,150, while East China Normal University's exceeds by 200%. Survey data indicates that a good original article has far greater dissemination effect than other content [9]. Currently, BNU Library WeChat columns are mainly divided into three categories: information literacy education, reading promotion, and notifications/others. The first two are presented through relatively fixed columns, as detailed in Table 1 .

These columns have been gradually formed through continuous adjustment during long-term WeChat operations. The most recent major column adjustment began at the end of 2016. After one year of operation, sub-series under main columns have been continuously refined and improved. The current column framework can relatively completely reflect business needs and basically achieve the original goals of top-level design and theme planning for WeChat content. Meanwhile, column styles and editorial characteristics have matured and stabilized through continuous improvement, forming several representative high-quality columns.

## 2.3 Refined Content Management

First, the library cultivates in-depth content with originality as the main focus. In literature surveys on WeChat research, many articles point out the current situation of low proportions of original articles in library WeChat accounts. Currently, except for a very small number of database activity notifications that use third-party text for editing, all other tweets published by BNU Library WeChat are original in content and form, written personally by librarians or campus faculty and students, or compiled by librarians through planning—demonstrating significant effort in content creation and making it a WeChat account worth following. The “Jingshi Treasures” column features original works based on special collection ancient books in graphic format. Although this column's topics have a relatively narrow audience, high-quality original professional articles have attracted high attention from readers related to literature and history both on and off campus, with other media repeatedly applying for reprint permission.

Second, the library coordinates scheduling and headline planning. With the expansion of library services and deepening internet thinking among librarians,

more departments hope to use the WeChat platform for services and publicity. The volume of library WeChat content continues to increase, requiring overall coordination of the publishing plan and headline arrangements. To maximize the value of each WeChat push, the WeChat working group determined through discussion that headlines should prioritize highly original key columns and major library events. Every weekend in the WeChat work QQ group, staff first report next week's WeChat content, publishing time, and whether it will be a headline, which is then summarized and coordinated. Columns with fixed publishing cycles can be scheduled in advance; when conflicts with headlines occur, the team utilizes headline vacancy periods on weekdays and makes full use of weekends for content that cannot be published on workdays. To increase influence, BNU Library WeChat also publishes regularly during winter and summer vacations, continuously releasing library-themed movie introductions, reading lists, and classic essays, achieving good results. During the 2017 winter vacation, the library consecutively pushed "A Poetic Time Exclusively from the Library for the New Year," "Think About Life at the Beginning of the New Year," and "Give TA a Special Valentine's Day Gift," receiving high click rates.

Third, the library refines key points and standardizes editing. BNU Library WeChat platform information can be edited directly on the WeChat platform by department staff (long-term or short-term authorized binders), or WeChat material documents can be sent to the library office (hereinafter "Library Office") WeChat manager for editing. Regardless of the editing method, accuracy, timeliness, and applicability of published content must be ensured. Text materials require clear logic, no factual errors, fluent sentences, no typos, and correct punctuation usage. Uploaded images must be clear and suitable for mobile reading. All required fields in the WeChat platform must be completed, including title, body, header image, and summary. Long-term fixed columns need to design and use relatively uniform templates, while other temporary activities, notifications, and press releases require separate style and color design to match content, ensuring overall aesthetic layout. After initial editing, the preview function should be used to check the full content on both web and mobile platforms to verify text, links, images, and layout for errors and correct display.

Fourth, the library strengthens interaction to attract reader participation in content construction. Beyond the library acting as content provider, readers should be actively mobilized to participate. University library readers have high average education levels, with thoughts, broad vision, insights, and willingness to express themselves. First, campus scholars and experts are important resources for WeChat content. Their direct participation or cooperation can enhance content quality. For example, the "Seasonal Folk Customs · Solar Terms" column invited experts who participated in the "Twenty-Four Solar Terms" UNESCO application as consultants to review content and provide materials, while encouraging faculty and students to comment with solar term folk customs from their hometowns. Each solar term activity attracted active participation from WeChat followers. Second, the library solicits content from students for publication on WeChat. For instance, "Ancient Books Treasures" specially invited

intern students in special collections and ancient books departments to write “Pian Shi Chun Qiu” about their work experiences, resonating with many faculty and students. Another example is the “Enjoy Reading Time · BNU Readers” activity, which invited faculty and students campus-wide to select and record their favorite passages from classic books as audio files for broadcast on the WeChat platform. Each WeChat post extends from the reading audio, accompanied by the reader’s profile, reading attitude, and personalized recommendations reflecting readers’ thoughts and insights, combining graphics with audio and video. This approach received enthusiastic responses from faculty and students, with the series consistently attracting attention and numerous comments.

## 2.4 Strengthening Campus New Media Cooperation and Interaction

As previously cited data demonstrates, university WeChat public platforms have become the most active and influential media platforms on campus. Various university departments, including the library, have launched their own WeChat public platforms, each with different positioning, focus, and user groups. The previous section mentioned that BNU Library WeChat strengthens interaction to attract reader participation; similarly, attention must be paid to strengthening cooperation and interaction with other campus WeChat accounts.

First, the library strengthens cooperation with the university’s official WeChat account. The university’s official account has a larger readership than the library’s official account. For content requiring university-wide awareness—such as library usage guides, library regulations, university-wide information literacy courses, major special reports, and year-end library big data—the library publishes on both its own official account and the university’s official account. The BNU Library WeChat team also utilizes student team members from the university’s official account to design hand-drawn promotional materials and special topics, achieving excellent results. For example, the end-of-2015 release “A Day in the Life of a Top Student at the Library,” which integrated library usage rules and skills through a beautiful top student’s daily life, was well-received by users, reaching over 10,000 views on its first day and being widely reprinted by media such as Tencent Education.

Second, the library cooperates with other campus WeChat media. Based on the characteristics of library content, the library selects appropriate campus public accounts (with suitable readers) for reprinting. For example, after releasing “Jingshi Treasures” involving typical humanities and historical figures, which aligns with the content accepted by the campus public account “Zhang Huang Chinese Studies,” the BNU Library WeChat team requests reprinting by that account. Such cooperation promotes broader and more targeted dissemination of library official WeChat content, while also enhancing the library’s visibility and influence on campus.

### 3. WeChat Publishing Effects

Through recent efforts, BNU Library WeChat's publishing effects have significantly improved. BNU Library WeChat platform backend statistics show: in 2017, total graphic click volume reached 288,554, a 75% increase from 2016; sharing and forwarding volume reached 8,127, a 119% increase from 2016; WeChat collection volume reached 2,696, a 117% increase from 2016; and cumulative followers reached 23,952, a 39% increase from 2016. These statistics demonstrate that the optimized WeChat content construction work has achieved remarkable results, meeting expected goals in enhancing BNU Library WeChat's dissemination power and influence.

### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Using WeChat to expand services is an inevitable trend for university libraries. In recent years, university libraries have increased investment in human, material, and financial resources for WeChat platform construction, leading to significant overall improvements in service content, operational strategies, and technological development. The library field's utilization of WeChat platforms has moved beyond the initial exploratory stage into a refined and specialized development phase. Meanwhile, readers' requirements for library WeChat public accounts continue to increase. As the most important knowledge dissemination platform for university libraries currently, content construction requires continuous effort:

1. Conduct careful investigation of reader needs and usage habits, and demonstrate the library's resource characteristics through overall planning of WeChat content sections.
2. Emphasize content innovation, insist on original copywriting, and improve tweet quality.
3. Focus on transforming high-quality original content into signature columns that enhance the library's WeChat dissemination power and overall image.
4. Expand channels on campus and external new media platforms to launch quality content collaboratively and expand influence.
5. Vigorously promote institutional development of new media work within the library for standardized management, which both clarifies workflows and controls WeChat content quality through management procedures. As a continuous work item for university libraries, only through long-term planning, overall layout, and establishment of standardized daily management mechanisms can new media work ensure sustainable and stable development.

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## Author Contributions

Zhao Linzhen: Data analysis and initial draft writing; Li Shuning: Research topic conception, framework design, and manuscript revision; Zhang Ling: Topic discussion and revision.

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/significance] This paper aims to provide experience and suggestions for university libraries in constructing WeChat public platform tweet content. [Method/process] Through case analysis, network data research, and comparative analysis, this paper introduces the concept, principles, effects, and management methods of the WeChat public account content construction of Beijing Normal University Library. [Result/conclusion] The paper proposes suggestions focusing on the overall planning of WeChat content sections, insisting on original copywriting, serializing high-quality original columns, strengthening cooperation with campus new media, and vigorously promoting the construction of WeChat work systems.

**Keywords:** university library; WeChat public platform; WeChat subscription account; content construction

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